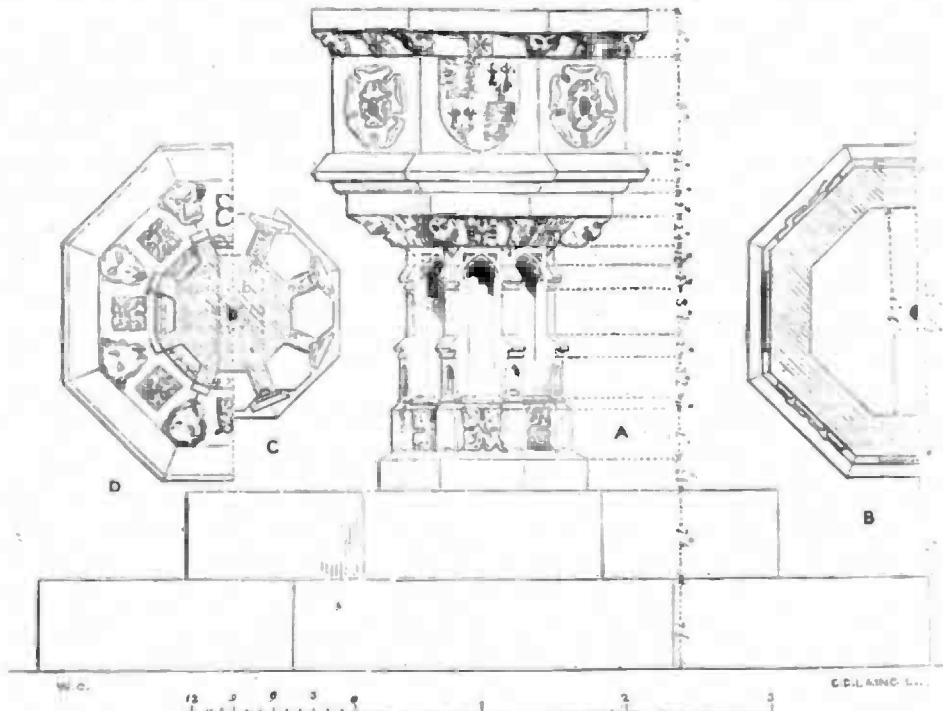


FONT FROM ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, MARGATE.

FONT FROM ST. JOHN'S CHURCH,
MARGATE.

THE church of St. John, Margate, is a very large structure, but is particularly devoid of architectural beauty: it contains little worthy of notice, except the subject of the present illustration, the font; which is a good specimen of late Perpendicular. It is an octagon on plan, with shields and roses on alternate sides: the only shield which remains intelligible, is that shewn in the engraving, having the arms of England quartered with those of France. Haisted, in his "History of Kent," states that other shields bore the arms of the Cinque Ports. The top of the font appears unfinished, or as if it had been deprived of some mouldings.

A, shews the elevation. B, half-plan across the bowl. C, half-plan of pedestal. D, the same, looking upwards. W. CAVELER.

SIR JOHN RENNIE'S CONVERSAZIONE.

THE new president of the Institution of Civil Engineers gave his first *soirée* to the members of that body on the 24th inst., at his residence in Whitehall-place, and invited a distinguished party to meet them, including a number of ladies.

To increase the accommodation, a temporary building was "waved up" at the back of the house, and formed the chief saloon, with a gallery below for models. The walls and ceiling of the former were decorated in the Italian fashion with painting, by Mr. Sang,—*encore* Mr. Sang,—who we have no doubt feels as much surprised himself at being put over the heads of English artists as we know his countrymen abroad are at the favour with which he has been visited. Why, in the world, we should go to Germany for decorations such as these, pretty as they may be, it puzzles one to discover. There are decorators in Bavaria who can do fine things, and might advance us if they were to work here for a time; but as to the painter in question—lud! what foolish people we Englishers are!

This, however, is not to disparage Sir John Rennie's elegant room and profuse hospitality. Drawings, bronzes, models of bridges, steam-engines, and atmospheric roads filled every table, and the house was crowded with the men

who had designed them, and others who could appreciate.

Amongst the models we may mention, Mitchell's screw-pile battery; the Air Point Lighthouse, by Messrs. Walker and Burgess; Captain Boswall's plan for harbours built with arched piers; the original design, by Mr. Stephenson, for an iron bridge of two arches, each of 360 feet span, to carry the Chester and Holyhead Railway across the Menai Straits, but which is now to be superseded by the suspended tunnel-bridge, formed of wrought-iron; the Folkestone Viaduct, by Mr. W. Cubitt; a cast-iron trussed girder bridge, by Mr. Borthwick; and a model of a stone bridge, with flat elliptical arches, designed some years since by Mr. Rennie, to replace Westminster-bridge. There was a fine model of the "Great Britain," and several of vessels to be propelled by the screw, designed by Mr. Guppy; a steam-frigate, with direct-acting engines and screw-propeller, by Mr. Rennie; a beautiful pair of marine engines, by the late Mr. Henry Maudslay; Mr. Bodmer's proposed horizontal engines and screw-propeller; Mr. Hick's improved locomotive engine; and Messrs. Grissell and James's combinations of a weighing machine and crane, to ascertain the weight of an object while raising it.

ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE.*

"In the preceding portion of this article, we have described six existing types of the *Augustan Basilica*: a seventh remains, destined to exercise, even more than the Roman fabrics, a permanent influence upon Christian architecture. In the *Augustan Basilica*, the horizontal principle (to adopt the term sanctioned by Whewell and Willis) predominated. Such a Basilica is a building consisting of single columns or bearing shafts, supporting either a continuous entablature, or a continuous range of arches, covered by an open roof connected by transverse beams. The *Basilica of the Lower Empire* consists of compound piers, to which columns are annexed, but more for ornament than use, and supporting the vaults and arches by which the edifice is roofed. This type completed what the others began. The Basilica of the Lower Empire is the remote

though lineal progenitor of the Gothic style, and through the Gothic, of all the ecclesiastical architecture, properly so called (for we exclude such monstrosities as the Madeleine at Paris) of modern times. Palladio, Michael Angelo, Wren, the greatest of all, whenever they build churches, are Goths in heart. They could not do without Gothic. St. Paul's is a Gothic cathedral in disguise. Vaulting, as observed by Mr. Willis, whose observations we shall now freely adopt, was brought to great perfection by the Romans at the period when, according to the usual conventional phrase, the arts have been said to decline. Compensation is a universal law, both in the intellectual and the physical creation. When taste and elegance, the fine sense of beauty, and the talent for æsthetic decoration waned away, the science of architecture acquired a new dignity and a new power. The art of vaulting, now fully developed, was employed in the vast and complicated structures of the baths, the villas, the piscinas, the amphitheatres, whose ruins linger in Rome, or decorate the magic landscapes of the Bay of Naples, where some of the most remarkable specimens are found. Many difficulties were offered in these structures, when the architect was required to connect and combine the vaulting with the supporting walls; but the hindrance became a stimulant.

The endeavours made by the architects to master these difficulties, brought the art of vaulting to great perfection. Omitting less important examples, or buildings of which we do not possess sufficient details, we are fully enabled to understand the general scheme. Three of the great ruins of Rome will afford us the requisite knowledge of the scheme of construction. The great halls of the baths of Caracalla and Diocletian supply what is wanting to restore the ruins long considered by antiquaries as the *Temple of Peace*—ruins now clearly ascertained by Hensen to be the remains of the *Basilica* erected by *Maxentius*, either in the vicinity or upon the site of the magnificent temple raised by *Vespasian*. If the vaultings of the *Therma* be added to the ruins of the *Forum*, we shall obtain an accurate idea of the *Maxentian Basilica*. The vast fragment of the building now standing is known to every one; other portions have been made out by excavations, and by uniting these remains with the analogous halls of the *Therma*, fitting

* See page 253, ante.